

THINGS TO WEAR

Indian people living in different areas of North America wore different types of clothing and jewelry. What they wore depended upon the weather and what materials they could find. Children living in warm desert areas wore practically nothing, while those living in the cold north wore layers of hides and furs. People who had to spend all their time looking for food didn't have much time for making fancy or beautiful things to wear. Those who had plenty of food had the time to create intricate jewelry and clothing with elaborate decorations made from quills, shells, beads, paints, and embroidery.

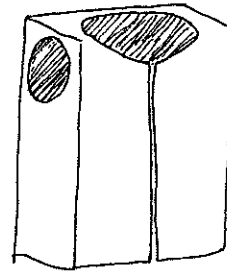
Tribes in the central Plains area usually wore clothing made of hides because they hunted large animals like elk and buffalo that lived there. Those living in the warm grasslands of California wove their simple clothing from grass and went barefoot.

Many Indian people enjoyed wearing all their jewelry when they could. It showed off their wealth and they believed that certain types of decoration gave them good luck or strength.

Paper Bag Vest

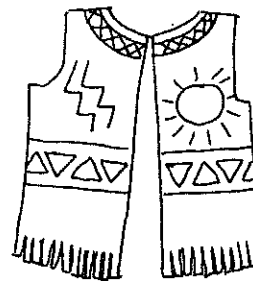
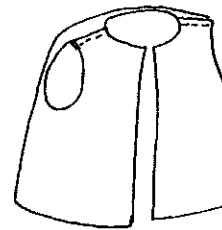
The Blackfoot, Chippewa, Sioux, and Crow people made vests from animal hides or fabric they traded for. Vests were useful, easy to make, and beautifully decorated. The Plains tribes used mostly geometric designs for decoration. The Eastern tribes, like the Chippewas, decorated with floral designs that were simple and brightly colored. Decorate yours however you choose.

Fast Fact Hide clothing was made from the skin of antelope, moose, elk, caribou, buffalo or deer. Deerskin was the finest and most desired because it was soft and lightly colored. To make the skin soft, the hair was scraped off and the hide was soaked in water and animal brains. Then it was pounded, stretched, and smoked over a campfire.



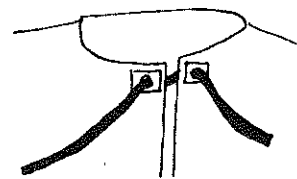
Cut arm and neck openings.

Staple at the shoulders for reinforcement.



Decorate with crayons or markers.

Reinforce with a piece of tape before punching holes for ties.



MATERIALS

Large brown paper bag

Yarn


Scissors

Stapler

Paints or colored markers

Tape

Hole punch

 Cut the front and neck opening from the bag. Cut out 2 circles at the sides for arm openings. Pull up the shoulders and staple them securely for reinforcement. You may need to trim off some of the bottom of the bag if it is too long.

Decorate the bag with geometric or floral designs as you like. You can also cut a fringe along the bottom edge.

To add a tie at the neck, reinforce both of the front neck edges with tape, and then punch 2 holes and thread a piece of yarn through.



Breechcloth and Apron




MATERIALS

Plains style:

Cloth, 1 by 4 feet
Belt

Woodland style:

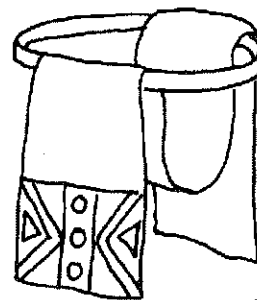
Large brown paper bag
Yarn
Paint or markers
Hole punch
Wide masking tape

 The Plains Indians wore breechcloths made of buckskin or cloth about 12 inches wide and 6 feet long. They were draped in front and back over a belt at the waist. They were worn by boys and men, and tribes made them in different styles and from various materials. You can make one by wrapping a long piece of fabric (1 foot wide and 4 feet long) through a belt at your waist.

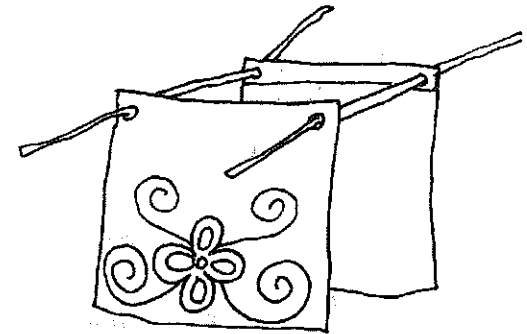
The Woodland Indian people wore an apron instead of a breechcloth. To make one like theirs, cut the sides

from a large brown paper grocery sack. Decorate the 2 sections with paint or markers. The Woodland people used designs with flowers and curving leaves. Reinforce the waist with wide masking tape. Punch holes and tie at the sides with pieces of colored yarn.

If you have a sewing machine, you can stitch colorful bias seam binding across the top of the front and back sections, leaving lengths at the ends for tying. Ask a grown-up to help you with the machine.

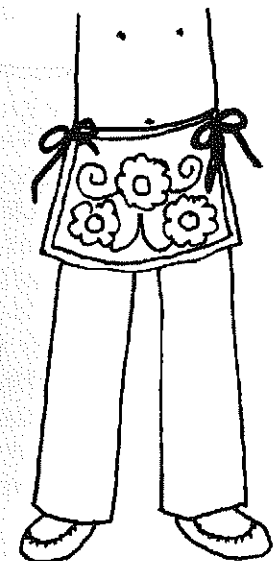


Wrap the breechcloth over a belt at the waist.



Woodland people wore aprons that tied at the sides.

Tie on over a pair of jeans.



Leggings

MATERIALS

Old pair of jeans
2 leather bootlaces or
sturdy cord for tying
Felt
Scraps of white felt, or
a plastic bottle (optional)
Scissors
Acrylic paint
Glue
Hole punch

For a boy's leggings, cut the jeans as shown. Girls' leggings only covered the calf of their leg, from the ankle to the knee.

Cut away the front and back of the jeans, leaving belt loops at the side so that a boy can wear them with a belt. Of course, swim trunks and a breechcloth will be needed, too!

For a girl, cut the leg sections of the jeans off below the knee. Cut slits along the top of the girl's leggings and lace the bootlaces through. They will be tied in place above the calf.

Decorate the leggings with acrylic paints or geometric shapes cut from felt and glued in place. Cut strips of felt into fringe and glue it down the side, too. Some Indians used concho shells to decorate their leggings and clothing. You can make your conchos by cutting circles from white felt or a white plastic bottle. Punch 2 holes in the center and lace through the jean fabric with lengths of yarn. Knot them securely.

Good Idea Indians traded for sewing thread when the traders arrived. However, before that they used "sinew." Sinew is a long muscle from the back of an elk or deer. It is stringy and can be pulled apart in thin threads. Thin pieces of sinew and bone needles were used to sew tiny bone beads and porcupine quills to clothing for decoration.

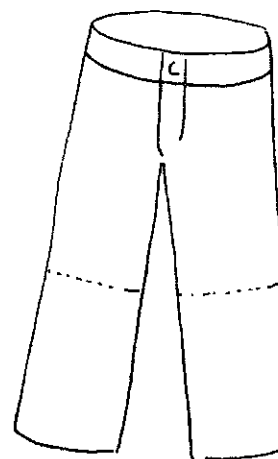
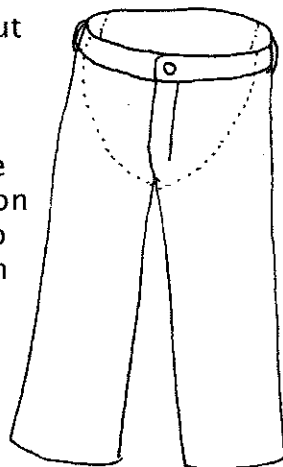
Many tribes wore leggings. Men and boys wore them to cover their legs completely. Women and girls wore shorter ones that went from the ankle to just below the knee. Leggings kept their legs warm and protected them from scratchy bushes, insects, and snakes.

Leggings were made from soft deerskin and decorated with beads and fringe. Men's leggings tied onto a belt at the waist; women's tied just below the knee. Men wore breechcloths with theirs; women wore dresses over them. Children usually dressed just like their parents.

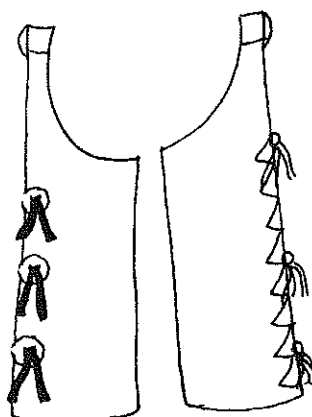
Fast Fact Bone needles have been found in Washington state that are over 10,000 years old.



For boys: Cut away the front and back of the jeans. Leave a belt loop on each side so that you can wear them with a belt.

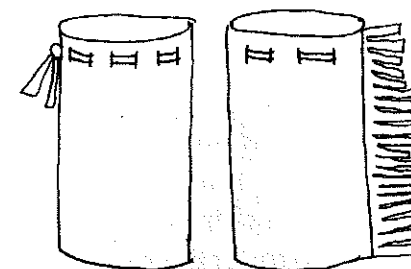


Cut off lower legs to use for girls' leggings.



Decorate with felt pieces, yarn tassels, and conchos made from felt or plastic bottles.

Girls tie theirs at the top. Cut a strip of felt fringe and glue down the side.



Armbands

MATERIALS

Narrow, round plastic bottle
(shampoo or
liquid detergent bottle)
Colored cloth or felt (optional)
Yarn or leather shoelace
Paper tube from gift wrap or
paper towels
Aluminum foil
Scissors
Hole punch
Markers or crayons

Cut an armband shape from the upper rounded portion of the plastic bottle. Use scissors and trim the edges so that they are rounded. Decorate with designs made by punching holes in the plastic. Draw designs on the plastic with a permanent marker.

Add a medallion by cutting a circle from a flat part of the bottle or from colored cloth or felt. Punch 2 holes in the medallion and in the side of the armband. Thread it in place with a piece of yarn or leather shoelace.

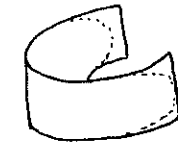
You can use paper tubes to make armbands that you color with markers or crayons. Wrap and glue on aluminum foil to make the tubes look like the silver jewelry worn by the people of the Southwest.



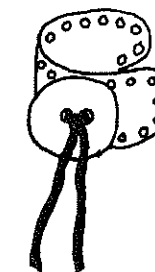
Cut armbands
from plastic
bottles.



Cut armbands
from paper
tubes.



Trim the corners to
round the edges.



Color with markers or punch holes
and tie on a shell gorget cut from a
flat section of the bottle.

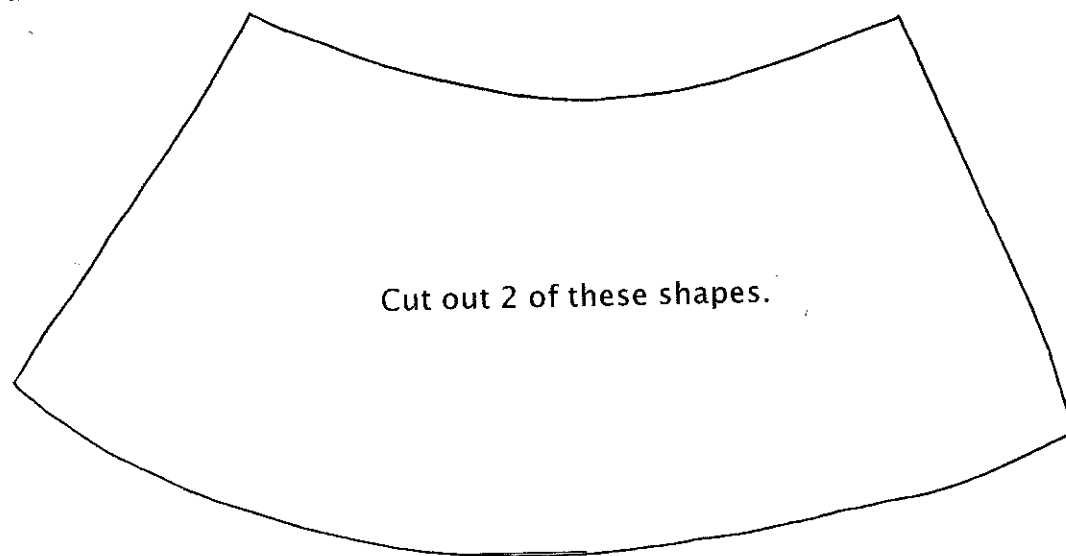


Cuffs



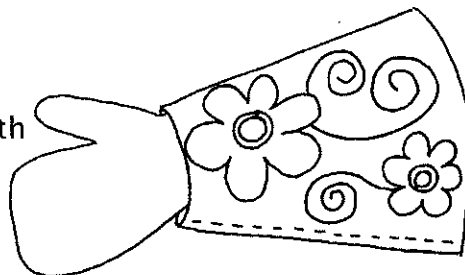
Decorated bands were worn on the wrist or arm. They weren't practical for daily work or hunting, but were worn for ceremonies, feasts, and dances.

Sioux, Ute, Crow, and Cheyenne people made cuffs of hide and decorated them with beads and fringe.

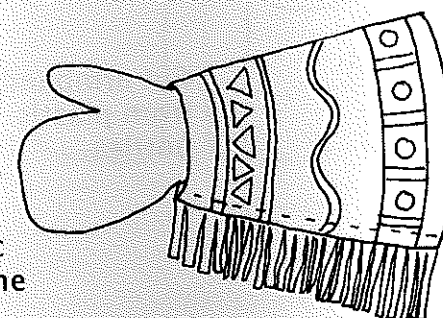


Cut out 2 of these shapes.

Decorate with flowers like Woodland people did.



Use geometric designs like the Plains people. Staple on a strip of fringe.




MATERIALS

Vinyl, heavy fabric, or construction paper

Scissors

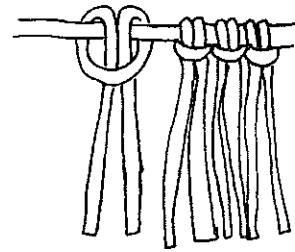
Paint or markers

Stapler or glue

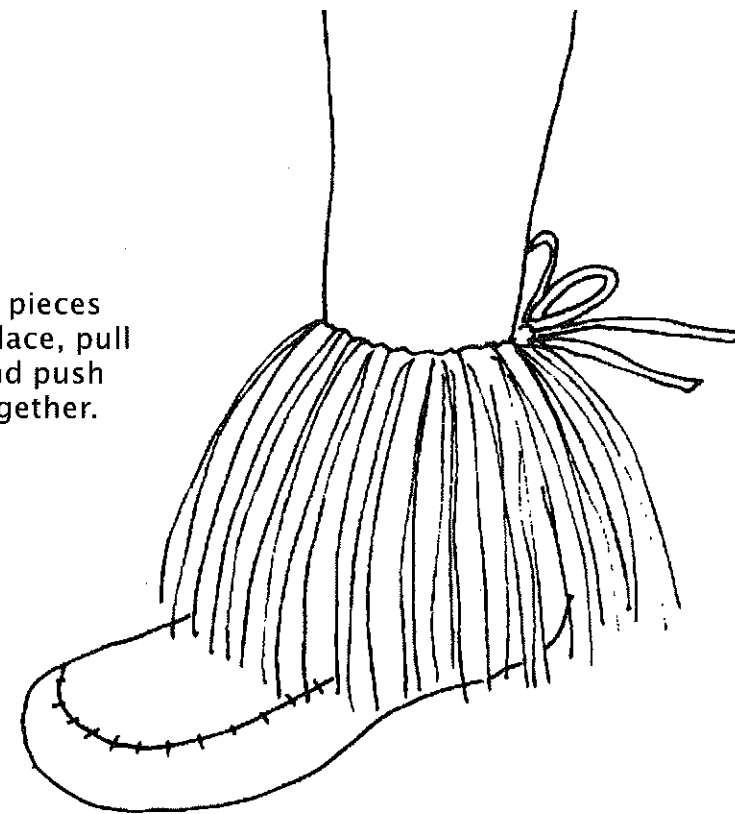
 Make your own cuffs by cutting the shape shown from vinyl, heavy fabric, or construction paper. Decorate with paint or colored markers. Cut a strip of paper fringe, and staple or glue it in place along 1 side. Staple the 2 pieces together at the sides. Slip the cuffs over your hands.



Anklets




Loop the yarn pieces over the shoelace, pull them tight, and push them close together.



MATERIALS

White yarn
2 shoelaces
Bells (optional)
Scissors

 Cut the yarn into 8-inch pieces. Loop and knot them onto the shoelace. Continue adding yarn until you have enough to wrap around your ankle. Tie the shoelace at the back of your leg and arrange the yarn fringe so that it hides the shoelace. As your legs move, the yarns will ripple and bounce. You can also tie on a tinkling bell to add a jingling sound.

Not for everyday wear, anklets were worn for dancing. Their graceful sway and bounce added to the dancer's movements. Kutenai people in the Montana and Idaho areas made them from the long, white hair of mountain goats.

People in other areas used grass, plant fibers, or yarn made from sheep's wool.


Fancy Dance Bustle

MATERIALS

Round pizza cardboard or
cardboard cut in a circle
Narrow belt or fabric sash
Construction paper
in various colors

Scissors

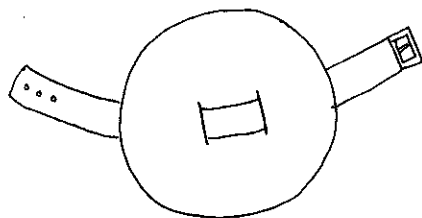
Glue

 Cut 2 slits in the cardboard to thread the belt or fabric sash through.

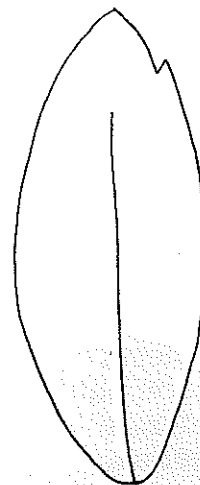
Cut several construction paper feathers, using one as a pattern.

Glue the feathers over the cardboard in a circular pattern, starting at the outer edge. Layer a row of shorter ones at the center.

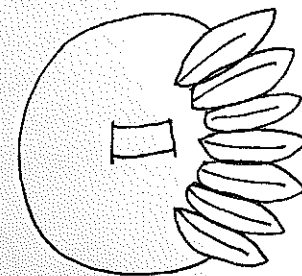
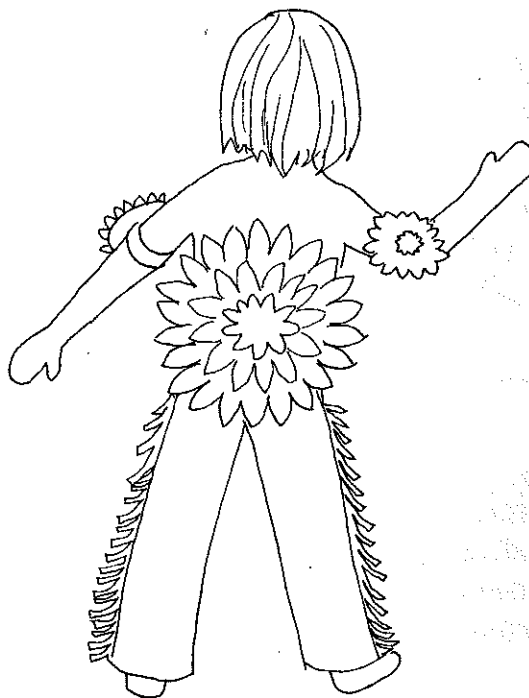
Tie the bustle on so that it fits snugly on your back, and you're ready to dance to the drumming! You can make 2 smaller bustles to tie onto your upper arms.



Cut 2 slits to slide the belt through.



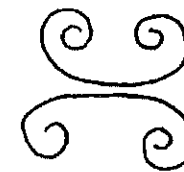
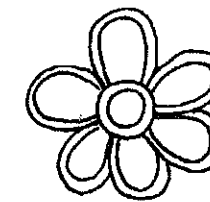
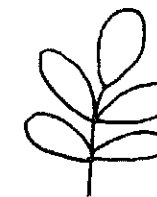
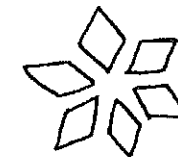
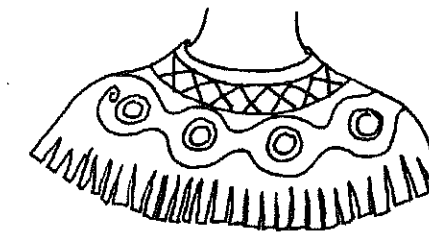
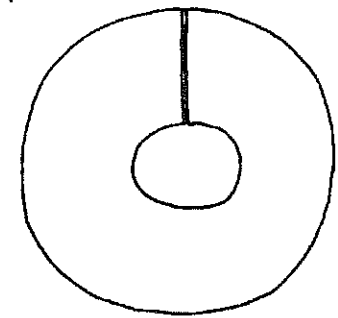
Cut several paper feathers and glue over the cardboard.



Indian dancers today wear elaborate rainbow-colored fancy dance bustles on their backs. They are made from feathers layered in a pattern over a round base. Smaller bustles are tied onto the dancer's upper arm.

Women and Girls' Cape

20 to 24 inches



Some design ideas

Women and girls in the Great Lakes area wore short leather capes over their dresses. They decorated them with designs made with porcupine quills or tiny beads.


MATERIALS

Large, heavy paper
(shelf paper, butcher paper,
or newspaper)

Large safety pin

Scissors

Markers or crayons

 Cut a circle about 20 inches in diameter, depending upon the size of your neck. Cut a front opening and neck area. Cut a fringe around the outside edge of the cape.

Decorate your cape with markers or crayons. Pin it at the back of the neck with the safety pin when you wear it.

MATERIALS


Large brown paper bag
Tagboard strip, 2 inches wide
and long enough to fit around
your head, plus 2 inches

Scissors

Pencil

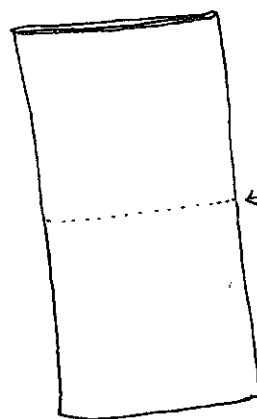
Crayons or markers

Stapler

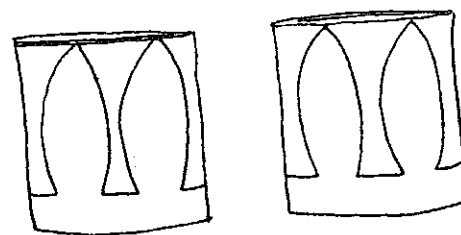
 Cut the bottom out of the bag. Fold it in half lengthwise twice and cut it in half as shown. Draw and cut out 2 feather shapes and a headband in 1 piece as shown. Repeat for the other section of the folded bag. Unfold. Color the feathers with crayons or markers.

Staple the tagboard headband to fit your head. Staple 1 strip of feathers to the headband. Cut the other section of feathers in half to make 2 equal sections. Staple them to the sides of the headband so that they drape down your back.

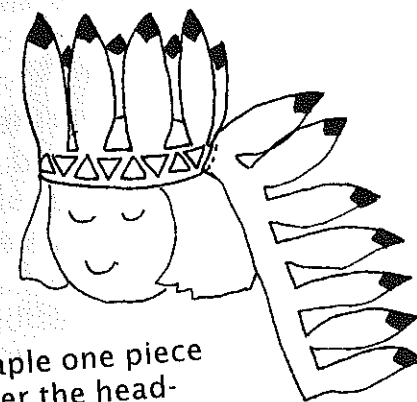
Plains Bonnet



Fold the bag in half twice. Cut in half.



Draw and cut out both pieces like this.



Some tribes added buffalo horns to their bonnet. Cut 2 curved shapes from colored paper and staple them at the sides.

Tape on an additional feather whenever you accomplish a brave or noble deed!

Staple one piece over the headband. Staple the other pieces to the sides so that they drop down your back.